

FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Statement

October 7, 2022

FNL Council Stands with Squamish Nation in Support of Seḥákw

(xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵw̓xwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliwətał (Tsleil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C.) The application to the Court for judicial review by the Kits Point Residents Association asking for the services agreement between the City of Vancouver and Squamish Nation to be quashed is an aggressive and objectionable action to reject the path-breaking and needed Seḥákw development.

The City of Vancouver is not prevented in any way from entering into a services agreement to ensure this needed housing development has appropriate services and a high quality of health, safety, and well-being for all residents. Moreover, the Vancouver Charter, like all provincial laws and municipal laws, is subject to the application of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which clearly endorses the importance of working with First Nations and supporting their self-determined priorities in relation to sustainable development in their traditional territories.

Squamish Nation has the complete and unqualified support of the First Nations Leadership Council (FNL Council). The Nation fought for decades for justice for the forced removal of their people from their territory without their consent. They have won and reclaimed a small portion of their traditional territories and invested years of efforts in a design and development that will serve all citizens of Vancouver well. Efforts to derail this important project, one of largest development projects for a First Nation ever in Canada, is insulting and tone deaf to the reconciliation agenda. A few residents did not get their way, and now they oppose a positive and progressive project.

The generosity of Squamish Nation in working with Vancouver, residents and others has been met with support and understanding, especially as we are in an era where respecting and supporting Indigenous led developments is long overdue. We hope the City will vigorously oppose this application, which is a political stunt, and stand firmly with Squamish Nation in support of their rights and reconciliation and this much needed housing development.

For Squamish Nation and its citizens, we cannot forget that while those at Kits point enjoyed living in their territory over the years, the members of the Squamish Nation were forcibly pushed off their territory. The irony is not lost on us that those who have enjoyed life on lands stolen from First Nations are rushing into Court to challenge the City supporting a reasonable and necessary services agreement.

The FNL Council stands with the City of Vancouver and supports this project. We stand with Squamish Nation and applaud their tireless efforts to obtain justice for their peoples. A small number of residents oppose this, but they will not succeed, and like hundreds of other nuisance actions that have tried to stop First Nations from building a future, this too will fail.

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